

of Southern California and Mexico. On either geographical or other grounds the case is scarcely better for the other subspecies of his *alpestris* group.

In the present volume, as in previous volumes of this series, Mr. Sharpe displays his usual independence of the strict law of priority, the case of *Ploceus baya* (p. 488) being an illustration in point, where an Indian Weaver-bird was named by Linnæus *Loxia philippina* and the species known for a long period as *Ploceus philippinus*. Later (1844) it was called *Ploceus baya* by Blyth, this latter name being also in common use for a long period for an allied species, to which of late it has been restricted. But as no Weaver-bird has ever come from the Philippines, the name *philippinus* is discarded for *baya*, and an older name than *baya* is properly revived for the species commonly known as *baya*.

In the course of the volume no less than 31 new names are proposed for species and subspecies (all of course, *more Brittanico*, binomial in form), and 11 new generic names are introduced, the latter being as follows: 1. *Spodiopsar* = *Polioopsar* Sharpe, preoccupied; 2. *Chalcopsar* = *Megalopterus* Smith, preoccupied; 3. *Hagiopsar*, type *Amydrus tristrami* Scl.; 4. *Heteropsar*, type *Lamprocolius acuticaudus* Boc.; 5. *Penthetriopsis*, type *Loxia macroura* Gm.; 6. *Stictospiza*, type *Fringilla formosa* Lath.; 7. *Granatina*, type *Fringilla granatina* Linn.; 8. *Heterhyphantes*, type *Malimbus nigricollis* Vieill.; 9. *Nesacanthis*, type *Foudia eminentissima* Bon.; 10. *Chersophilus*, type *Alauda duponti* Vieill.; 11. *Heliocorys*, type *Galerita modesta* Heugl.—J. A. A.

**Hargitt's Catalogue of the Woodpeckers.\***—The well circumscribed family of the Woodpeckers comprises, according to Mr. Hargitt, 50 genera and 385 species and subspecies, represented in the British Museum by 7894 specimens. "As a rule," says Mr. Hargitt, "the species of the Picidæ are very clearly defined, but in *Dendrocopus* [= *Dryobates*], *Picoides*, and *Colaptes* there is a decided tendency to subdivide into races." Only in the case of the North American *Colaptes* does "there seem to be any definite appearance of hybridization." This leads him to the consideration of the question of what constitutes a species, and he accepts as the test non-intergradation with allied forms; "where intergradation takes place the allied form is a subspecies or race." On the question of insular forms he says, "Island forms may or may not possess some slight differences from typical birds, but not sufficient to separate them; yet some authors take it for granted that with insular separation there can be no intergradation: therefore we find insignificant islands made to father a host of indifferent species or subspecies; but I fail to see

\* Catalogue of the Picariæ in the Collection of the British Museum. — Scansores, containing the Family Picidæ. By Edward Hargitt. London: Printed by order of the Trustees. Sold by Longmans & Co., 39 Paternoster Row; [etc.] 1890. 8vo. pp. xvi+598, pl. xv. = Catalogue of the Birds in the British Museum, Vol. XVIII.

(if perfect intergradation be insisted on in determining the position of a bird as a subspecies) how island forms can be reduced to this rank. . . . Some island forms, although they may certainly differ slightly from typical birds, have differences so suggestive of climatic variation only and not of specific value, that I take them upon their own merits and assign them a position accordingly."

The case of *Colaptes auratus* and *C. mexicanus* [=cafer] is discussed at some length, with a decided leaning to the theory of hybridization as an explanation of the mixed character of the specimens formerly recognized under the name *Colaptes hybridus*. He also makes some suggestive allusions respecting the evolution of the North American forms of *Colaptes*.

In matters of nomenclature we regret to see that Mr. Hargitt is a purist, and by no means a strict adherent of the law of priority. Generic names formed so nearly in accordance with their etymology as to be readily susceptible of emendation are accepted in an emended form, while those of barbarous or hybrid origin are rejected, without regard to the currency they may have obtained. In respect to specific names, those not pleasing to the author, through faulty significance or construction, are thrown over, regardless of previous currency.

While only one new species is apparently named in the present volume (*Sasia everetti* p. 559, pl. xv), we find the following new generic names: 1, *Sapheopipo*, type *Picus noguchii* Seeb.; 2, *Cercomorphus*, type *Picus flavus* Müll.; 3, *Microstictus*, = *Lichtensteinipicus* Bon., rejected; 4, *Nesocitites*, type *Picumnus micromegas* Sundev.

The following points will be of interest to readers of 'The Auk,' from their bearing on North American birds, and as an indication of the author's methods. In respect to *Colaptes*, the specific name *mexicanus* of Swainson, 1827, is of course adopted in place of *cafer* Gmelin, 1788. Under *mexicanus* are synonymized both *ruficapileus* Ridgw. and *saturator* Ridgw., the former recognized as a species and the latter as a subspecies in the A. O. U. Check-List. Mr. Hargitt says: "The varied forms of *C. mexicanus* appear to be the result of climatic influence [!], as they are not confined to any particular geographical area [*sic*]. An examination of a large series of specimens convinces one that they cannot well be separated." He cites birds from Vancouver and Nevada that resemble others from Mexico. Has it occurred to him that the North American forms of *Colaptes* are migratory birds, that the particular examples mentioned from Mexico are either winter specimens or without record of capture, and that distribution in the breeding season is one of the most important elements of the problem?

The mixed assemblage presenting all sorts of combinations of the characters of *C. auratus* and *C. cafer*, which Baird proposed to call *C. hybridus*, is here treated as a *species*, under the name "*Colaptes ayresi*" of Audubon! His reasoning on this point is as follows: "The very existence of this race, occupying as it does a distinct region, seems to point to the conclusion that the birds are fertile, otherwise it would cease to exist,

and hybrids would only be found where the opposite species came in direct contact. . . . The breed may be one of long standing, but that it is replenished by pure blood from without seems highly probable, and may account for the violent contrast sometimes produced in the two sides of the same bird, which I think would not result in a race if left entirely to themselves, as the tendency would be towards the acquirement of a fixed character. The name given by this author [Audubon] must therefore be understood to apply to the race produced originally by the union of *C. auratus* and *C. mexicanus*, and possessing such varied characters as to render description vague and indefinite, but evidently suggestive of very close interbreeding, and not as tending to show that all the individuals comprising the race are the immediate descendants of true *C. auratus* and *C. mexicanus*. There can be no doubt that *C. auratus* also interbreeds with *C. chrysoides*, [and the same may be said of *C. mexicanus*] but I do not see how any specific title can be applied to these hybrids, which occupy no distinct region." While this is a pretty fair statement of the facts and conditions of the case, the method of treatment seems hardly consistent with the author's avowed tenets, above quoted.

The Mexican form, commonly known as *C. mexicanoides* Lafr. (1844), is called *submexicanus* Sundev. (1866), for the only reason apparently that the latter in some way seems to him to be a better name, thus supplanting a name hitherto in almost universal use by a much later name used previously but once!

Under *Melanerpes*, *M. formicivorus bairdi* is considered as a synonym of *Picus melanopogon* Temm., the form standing as "Subsp. *a. Melanerpes melanopogon*." It is evident, however, that *melanopogon* is a pure synonym of *formicivorus* Swain., as well from the original description and figure as from the locality of the type.

*Dendrocopos* Koch (type *Picus major* L.) replaces *Dryobates* Boie (type *Picus pubescens*). This point was well considered by the A. O. U. Committee, and *Dendrocopos* Koch was found to be apparently slightly antedated by *Dendrocopos* Vieill., though both names were published the same year. In any case *Dryobates* has a clear title, while *Dendrocopos* has not. Under *Dendrocopos*, *Dryobates hyloscopus* Cab. & Heine is synonymized with *D. villosus harrisi*, with no reference to the recent revival of *hyloscopus* to subspecific rank by American writers. *Dryobates villosus maynardi*, a Bahaman form, is recorded from Florida (Addenda, p. 570), on the basis of two females collected at Tarpon Springs, by Mr. W. E. D. Scott, and recorded by him (Auk, VI, p. 251) as *Dryobates villosus auduboni*. This latter form is synonymized by Mr. Hargitt with *D. villosus*! *D. pubescens oreocus* Batchelder is synonymized under *D. p. gairdneri*, with the remark, in a footnote, "In my opinion barely worthy of subspecific rank"; but it is not so treated.

*Picoides dorsalis* is accorded full specific rank—explainable probably on the ground of the smallness of Mr. Hargitt's series, the evidence of which is preferred to the consensus of American opinion, based on adequate material.

Mr. Hargitt's treatment of our Pileated Woodpecker presents a curious and lamentable case. He removes it from the genus *Ceophlaeus* (the propriety of which we leave as merely a question of opinion) and places it under *Dryotomus* of Swainson (1831), of which he considers *Hylatomus* of Baird (1858) as a pure synonym, giving the *same species as the type of each*, namely, *Picus pileatus* Linn. Although Swainson placed *P. pileatus* under his genus *Dryotomus*, he expressly gives as its "Typical species," *Picus martius* (Fauna Bor.-Am., II, p. 301), thus making his *Dryotomus* a pure synonym of the genus *Picus*, as of late restricted, leaving *Hylatomus* Baird available for *Picus pileatus*, for those who wish to separate it from *Ceophlaeus*. Furthermore, *Picus pileatus* appears to have been placed under *Dryotomus* by only two authors, Swainson and Bonaparte, and by no one since 1838, till Mr. Hargitt came on the scene, while it was almost universally recognized as *Hylatomus pileatus* from 1858 to 1886! Swainson simply treated *Picus pileatus* and *P. martius* as congeneric species under his genus *Dryotomus*, expressly naming *Picus martius* as the type! In reviewing works so indispensable and of such inestimable value to the ornithologist as are the volumes of the British Museum 'Catalogue of Birds,' it is painful to find one's self confronted with misleading statements on points of vital importance in nomenclature, of which the above is unfortunately by no means an isolated case.

—J. A. A.

Merriam's 'Results of a Biological Survey of the San Francisco Mountain Region and Desert of the Little Colorado, Arizona.'—In 'North American Fauna, No. 3,'\* Dr. C. Hart Merriam, Chief of the Division of Ornithology and Mammalogy, U. S. Department of Agriculture, gives an account of results of a biological survey of the San Francisco Mountain region in Arizona made by him, with a small corps of assistants, during August and September, 1889. The area surveyed carefully comprised about 5,000 square miles, while 7,000 more were roughly examined, and a biological map prepared of the whole. In addition to Mr. Vernon Bailey, Dr. Merriam had with him in the field Prof. F. H. Knowlton, assistant paleontologist, U. S. Geological Survey, and Dr. Leonhard Stejneger, curator of reptiles in the U. S. National Museum. The report consists of (1) General Results, with special reference to the geographical and vertical distribution of species. (2) Grand Cañon of the Colorado. (3) Annotated List of Mammals with descriptions of new species. (4) Annotated List of Birds. (5) Annotated List of Reptiles and Batrachians, with descriptions of new species. The last is by Dr. Stejneger, the others by Dr. Merriam, who also has an illustrated paper on 'Forest Trees of the San Francisco Mountain Region, Arizona,' and another on

\*North American Fauna, No. 3. Published by authority of the Secretary of Agriculture. 8vo. pp. viii+136, with a frontispiece, 13 plates, and 5 maps. Published Sept. 11, 1890.